

# Westwinds at 'Twilight'

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**B**lood hunters swarmed the little shopping center. Their eyes flashed in the night, the balmy night at the summer's height, August 1st when the year's first wheat fills granaries and bellies. Lammias Lughnasadh to some, the night pulled them together under piercing street lights and glowing shop windows. I could see that the stories were true. They are indeed devastatingly, inhumanly beautiful.

Or at least they clean up pretty good. The scene was Westwinds Bookshop at the Duxbury Marketplace by Hall's Corner. The event was the midnight roll out of Stephenie Meyer's latest thriller, "Breaking Dawn," the



## WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

fourth in her runaway best-selling Twilight series. The blood hunters, forty or more Duxbury teens, girls outnumbering the lucky boys three to one. A few werewolves cloaked in human form, I'm sure, but the rest were vampires.

Young Adult Librarian Ellen Shoeyenbos once again teamed with her avid teen readers and Westwinds proprietor Chris Harnden to usher in

the book's release at the earliest possible moment seconds after midnight on August 1st (er, August 2nd by then). Competing with similar events at the Mall and Pamp superstores, Chris was tickled to see such a large contingent choose Mom and Pop instead. With skills honed through the Harry Potter phenomenon, Chris and Ellen kept the crowd of youngsters active and interested from 10:00 pm or so right through the actual release.

Hunting for blood? Through a series of games, contests, and live-action demonstrations the kids earned blood drop shaped tokens, with the winner redeeming the tokens for a splendid werewolf and vampire chess set collected by Betsy Hunter and her

continued on page 4

# Night comes alive for 'Twilight'

continued from page one

daughters, all Twilight fanatics. Dennis White led the blood count in the early returns, but a last-minute surge by Christine Doherty and a consortium of girls won the night with twenty-one drops of blood.

Duxbury teens are knockouts when they dress up for a show, but the real beauty is that once again they are reading voraciously for pleasure. Not that they ever stopped. J.K. Rowling's success at getting kids to read extended, detailed fiction with her Harry Potter series proved that the book remains a potent art form for young readers. Like the Harry Potter series, Meyer's works are aimed at youngsters but are written to engage any reader. The Twilight series reaches an older crowd

of kids – romance and intense physical feelings appear late in Harry Potter's world, but right off the bat when Bella Swan migrates to the tiny town of Forks, Washington to live with her father. Oops. Not right off the bat. That's Bram Stoker's 19th century vampire, Dracula. Meyer's vampires share some traits with Stoker's vision, but only a few.

"That's what makes them so great," said Wells Hunter. "Twilight vampires are completely different from the others."

She rattled off answers to my questions. No, they don't disappear in mirrors. They don't die if the sun hits them, they just sparkle. Most have powers, but not all the same. One can read minds, another tells the future (unless it changes.) Another can influence people's feelings. They're all "powers" that regular people might have, but boosted to supernatural levels. No, you can't kill one with a stake in the heart. They're super strong and tough as stone, and remember: they don't die in the sun, so they won't be hiding in a coffin, powerless against some new Van Helsing's relentless search.

Instead we have Edward, impossibly gorgeous young man – vampire, mind reader – and Bella Swan, the only person whose mind he cannot read. Of course, they fall in love. But the real love of the balmy night appeared moments after midnight when 40 teens, books now in hand, clustered under street lights and shop windows to read. Some in groups, some alone, all lost in their soaring imaginations. And for Westwinds Bookshop, no twilight, but a breaking dawn thanks to a crowd of loyal teens.

